

Librarians' Advocate

Official Publication of Librarians Affiliated with the University Council-American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

Why Should a Librarian Join the Union?

Let's be blunt. Librarianship was traditionally "women's work" -- one of the "helping professions." This type of work has been viewed as clerical rather than intellectual, demanding a high degree of hierarchical supervision, little autonomy, and (because we were expected to respond to psychological rather than financial rewards) carried with it shabby working conditions, little or no support staff, and, of course, low pay and low status.

This context still exists! Just look around at some of the working conditions under which we "professionals" operate. While you're at it, check the salary levels offered at other institutions.

It is not enough that we call ourselves "professional." It is not enough that others call us "professional." We must make sure that our working conditions, salary, and treatment reflect this status. This is where our union comes in. It is our voice, our "clout" if you will, in fighting against the legacy of "women's work."

THE UNION IS OUR SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR MAKING SURE THAT WE ARE TREATED AND REWARDED AS PROFESSIONALS AND ACADEMICS, SINCE IT CAN SPEAK FOR US ABOUT SALARY AND WORKING CONDITIONS, WHICH OTHER PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS CANNOT ADDRESS.

If you believe you are doing professional work and should have professional working conditions and rewards, you **must** join the union. When the union bargains for us, the University definitely looks to see how many librarians have chosen to join. If 100% of the represented librarians are members, our ability to negotiate for those things that will enhance our work life is immeasurable improved.

■ WHO IS THE UNION?

The union is us. From librarians on all campuses, the most often-asked question is: "What has the union done about ---?" It appears that librarians perceive the union to be an outside entity beyond their control, concern, or responsibility. However, what the union has accomplished or will gain in the future is totally dependent upon our individual involvement -- for we are the union. If there is no one to assist a colleague through the grievance process, grievances will not get resolved. If there are only a few librarians willing to participate in the bargaining process, our demands will not be negotiated as effectively as possible. If there is no one to call attention to violations of the contract by management, those misdeeds will continue unchecked. If there is no one to raise working condition and professional issues not addressed elsewhere, those issues will not be addressed. The administration will come to recognize the union's increased influence in University affairs when it seizes the lead and make its presence felt with intelligent, forceful statements and actions.

LAUC and the UFL

During the period of the election of an exclusive bargaining representative (which turned out to be the UFL, UC-AFT), the Librarians Association of the University of California (LAUC) was enjoined from discussing issues which were within the scope of bargaining as defined by the Higher Education Employer Employee Relations Act (HEERA). The union decided during the initial contract negotiations to leave certain professional issues to LAUC (e.g., administration of peer review activities, development of a code of professional standards/conduct, and distribution of professional development

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LAUC and the UFL, (from page 1)

awards). The expectation was that once the contract was in place, the union and LAUC would work together. While this has happened on some campuses, to the benefit of all, there are still places where there is apprehension when the union and/or the contract is mentioned. It is perfectly appropriate to refer to the contract in the context of LAUC activities. After all, LAUC's increased status within the University's governance structure is a direct outgrowth of unionization.

--- HOUR BY HOUR

Over the past several months, librarians at UCLA have had extended discussions about the use of time and the appropriate provisions of the contract. Bargaining Team members Miki Goral and Roberta Medford traveled to Berkeley and Davis where the universality of the issue became apparent. One of the most interesting areas of concern was how to reconcile the individual professional needs of librarians with the institutional needs of the Library. Specifically, the issue becomes how to insure that the obligations set by the University will be met (i.e., reference desk hours, committee assignments, materials selected, acquired, and cataloged) while the librarian has the freedom to function as academic appointees. Recently, the University prepared an *Administrative Training Manual* for managers and labor relations officers who will be administering the contract. Included in the manual are the University's interpretations of the contract language. It is highly instructive to read the University's interpretation of Section A, Article III, Professional Activities and

Development, dealing with flexible use of University time:

This section confirms the right of the University to schedule unit members for specific assignments. Once the specific University assignments (Monday 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the reference desk, for example) have been made and met, the Article requires the librarian in the unit to devote time and energies to service on behalf of the University. Librarians in the unit, in keeping with the tradition of the University for its academic employees, are free to make certain choices, within reason, about how to spend the remainder of their time. The parties did not attempt to negotiate a specific definition of "reasonable flexibility" or "reasonable individual discretion." If a question arises in this area the campus Labor Relations Office should be informed so the Office of Labor Relations can review the situation with the Office of the General Counsel. The major discussions at the table involved the right of the librarian in the unit to choose the professional organization(s) in which to become active and the need for sensitivity, understanding, and reasonableness by all parties concerned as library schedules and assignments are worked out. The general feeling voiced by the UFL was that librarians had suffered status deprivation because at some locations or in some instances the librarians had been treated or felt they had been treated as if they were staff employees.

The University is committed to treating librarians as academic employees. The appropriate references for librarians in the unit are the APM or the UFL Agreement.

While the union agrees in general with this interpretation, there are other aspects of the issue that need to be clearly understood. It is our position that as academic employees, we accept our responsibility to carry out the assignments made by the University, as long as they are reasonable. It is inappropriate for academics to record time of arrival, departure, lunch, "working late," etc., just as it is illegal under the contract for the University to expect us to adhere to a rigid schedule. Expecting equivalent "time off" is

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not what "flexible use of time" means.

We are not required to sign in on an attendance sheet or to "make up time" if we take a long lunch or arrive at work later than paraprofessional staff. The only time we are required to record and report is our use of sick leave and vacation, and this is to be done only once a month (see Articles XX and XXI). We have to assert our rights in this area and make our supervisors understand that we have these rights.

Any questions or problems arising out of these contract provisions should be brought to the immediate attention of a local union representative or of the Contract Administrator.

The UFL and the APM (or Alphabets Revisited)

One of the results of bargaining was that the University invited LAUC to make recommendations for revising those parts of the Academic Personnel Manual that affect Librarians. The changes proposed by the LAUC Ad Hoc Committee on Peer Review/Revision of the APM were by and large accepted by the University and became effective December 1, 1986. Each campus should have reviewed its local procedures for peer review to make sure that they are in conformity with the APM. If you think that your campus has not done this or if you believe that your campus procedures do not follow the guidelines outlined in Article IV of the Contract, please contact a member of the LAUC Professional Governance Committee. The LAUC Bylaws charge to this committee includes the following: "Serve as a review body for Divisions who may request evaluation of local peer review procedures."

The current members of the committee are: Barbara Kornstein, Berkeley (Chair); Susan Casement, Davis; Margaret Renton, Irvine; Miki Goral, Los Angeles; Carol Resco, Riverside; Peter Brueggeman, San Diego; Kenneth Weeks, San Francisco; Carol Gibbens, Santa Barbara; Terry Ferl, Santa Cruz.

THE UNION FIGHTS FOR LIBRARIANS' JOBS

A permanent job is usually assumed when a librarian is appointed to a potential career position. We were shocked to learn that this is not necessarily the University's assumption. On two campuses, librarians outside of the main library system have been laid off due to a supposed lack of funds. Local grievance representatives (librarian union members) have devoted untold hours to fighting these layoffs through every step of the grievance procedure. The University Council (UC-AFT) has approved financial and legal support to carry these cases to binding arbitration. The loss of any individual's job is extremely distressing and is a fundamental concern of the union.

Questionnaire Results

In the last issue of the *Librarians' Advocate*, we enclosed a very short, unscientific questionnaire about leaves. Fifty-eight were returned, in about the same proportion as there are librarians on each campus. Fewer than half the respondents were aware of the Special Two-Month Leave provision of the contract. Only 3 people reported having asked for this leave. Nineteen of the respondents have applied for a leave of some sort. Only 39 people had applied for professional development and research funds administered by LAUC.

While the results are not definitive, some general conclusions can be drawn. One, librarians have not read their contract. Two, the leave provisions of the contract are not being fully utilized. Three, librarians are not requesting funding because they do not have the time to pursue professional activities/research. The implications of these findings should be the subject of discussion on all campuses.

The LAUC Ad Hoc Committee to Investigate LAUC Members' Professional Development Needs is gathering data this year that should complement the results of our survey. Anyone who was asked to submit data is encouraged to do so.

New Contract Covering UFL Members

Each member of the bargaining unit should have received a copy of the new contract that was ratified by UC-AFT members last June. It has a blue cover and will be in effect until June 30, 1991. As provided for in Article XXXI, there may be changes negotiated in reopeners in May, 1988.

We encourage every librarian covered by this contract to read it and become familiar with its provisions. If you have any questions about it, you should call a member of the bargaining team or the president of the AFT local on your campus.

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